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Letter dated 3 January 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

In my capacity as the representative of the current Chairman of the African Union, I have the honour to forward herewith a communiqué on the situation in the Central African Republic, adopted by the African Union Peace and Security Council at its 44th meeting, held in Addis Ababa on 29 December 2005 (see annex I).

Please also find enclosed a brief on the security situation in the Central African Republic and the visit of an African Union mission to the region (see annex II).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annexes could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Aminu Bashir **Wali**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations
Representative of the current Chairman of the African Union

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Annex I to the letter dated 3 January 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English and French]

COMMUNIQUE OF THE 44TH MEETING OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 44th meeting held on 29 December 2005, adopted the following decision on the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR):

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the Report [PSC/PR/2 (XLIV)] submitted by the Commission on the security situation in the Central African Republic and the visit to the Region, from 25 October to 8 November 2005, by an AU Mission, as well as the additional information given to it;

2. **Expresses concern** about the persistence of insecurity in the North of CAR and the resulting displacement of people towards the South of Chad;

3. **Commends** the UNHCR and the NGOs present on the field for the assistance given to the Central African refugees in Chad and **stresses** the need to mobilise increased resources to enable the humanitarian agencies increase their assistance to the affected people;

4. **Expresses satisfaction** at the efforts made by the countries of the region and the Multinational Force of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (FOMUC), as well as by the United Nations, through the UN Office in Central African Republic (BONUCA), to address the insecurity and contribute to the establishment of the necessary conditions for the socio-economic recovery of the CAR and the consolidation of peace and stability in that country. Council **pays tribute** to the countries of the region and **encourages** them to continue to support the efforts of the Central African Government by maintaining the presence of FOMUC for the necessary duration, in order to restore security and stability. Council **expresses its support** to the efforts of the concerned neighbouring countries in addressing cross-border insecurity;

5. **Appeals** to the Member States and the Partners of the AU to provide FOMUC with the necessary means to strengthen its capacity and facilitate the smooth execution of its mandate, to contribute to the restructuring of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA), including the rehabilitation and building of the necessary infrastructures, and to support the concerned neighbouring countries in their efforts to address transboundary insecurity. To that end, Council **requests** the Commission, in close cooperation with the Executive Secretariat of CEMAC and the United Nations, to contribute to the sensitisation of the international community and to actively involve itself in the on-going initiatives of the neighbouring countries to address the prevailing insecurity;

6. **Reiterates** its appeal to all the bilateral and multilateral partners of the CAR and to the Member States to provide to the CAR all the necessary economic and financial assistance, including direct budgetary support, taking into account the particularly difficult situation in the CAR. In that regard, Council **encourages** the Chairperson of the Commission, in collaboration with the relevant institutions, including the African Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), to send a multi-disciplinary mission of experts to assess the situation and make recommendations on the assistance which the Member States and the AU could give to the CAR, within the framework of a comprehensive post-conflict reconstruction programme, covering both socio-economic and security aspects as well as other matters. In this respect, Council **stresses** the important role that could be played by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC).

7. **Requests** the Sub-Committee on Refugees of the Permanent Representative's Committee (PRC) to examine the situation of the Central African refugees in Chad and to take the appropriate steps in order to provide assistance, in coordination with the relevant institutions, in particular the UNHCR. Council **appeals** to the international community to respond generously to the United Nations Consolidated Appeal for 2006 for humanitarian and recovery activities in CAR;

8. **Decides** to remain seized of the matter.

Annex II to the letter dated 3 January 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English and French]

BRIEF ON THE SECURITY SITUATION IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR) AND THE VISIT OF AN AU MISSION TO THE REGION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Following information that the security situation in the north of the Central African Republic (CAR) has deteriorated, with people moving massively towards Southern Chad, the Chairperson of the Commission dispatched a fact-finding mission to the CAR, Chad and Cameroon, to collect reliable information on the events taking place in those areas and to examine with the authorities of the countries concerned the efforts being deployed to address the situation and how best the AU could support these efforts.

2. The Mission, which stayed in the region from 25 October to 8 November 2005, was led by Ambassador Pierre Yère, Senior Political Officer in the AU Office in Kinshasa, and comprised civilian and military officers of the Commission. The Mission collected information through discussions with civilian and military officials of the Governments of the three countries mentioned above, the United Nations agencies and NGOs working in the region, as well as directly with refugees. Some of the interlocutors provided documentary evidence.

3. In Bangui (CAR), the Mission held discussions with the Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and Francophonie, the Minister of Internal Affairs in charge of Public Security, the Minister of Finance and Budget, the Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, the Chief of Staff and the Commander of the CEMAC Multinational Force (FOMUC).

4. In Chad, the Mission held working sessions with the Minister of Defence, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Territorial Administration, the Ambassadors of France and the United States and the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator and Coordinator of the United Nations System. Accompanied by the representative of UNHCR in Chad, the delegation travelled to the south, where it visited the refugee camps of Yaroungou and Amboko in the Prefectures of Maro and Goré, respectively. The Mission met with officials of UNHCR and humanitarian NGOs, as well as with refugees.

5. In Yaounde, the Mission was received by the Director of the Criminal Investigation Department, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Defense, the Director of Territorial Organization in the Ministry of Territorial Administration, the Director-General of Foreign Research and the Representative of the UNHCR.

II. BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

6. After the coup d'Etat of 15 March 2003 which brought General François Bozizé to power, the CAR went through a 27-month period of transition during which a new electoral code, as well as several other legislations related to the

organization of elections were adopted. A new Constitution was also adopted by referendum on 5 December 2004. Parliamentary and presidential elections were held in March and May 2005. General Bozizé was elected after the second round and the coalition of parties that supported him won majority seats in Parliament.

7. In order to assess the situation following the elections and in the aftermath the establishment of the new State institutions, I sent my Special Envoy, Sadok Fayala, to Bangui and N'djamena from 15 to 22 June 2005. At its 33rd meeting held on 24 June 2005, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) decided to lift the suspension imposed on the CAR following the coup d'Etat of 15 March 2003.

8. The fact-finding mission to the CAR was therefore undertaken at a time when the constitutional rule had been re-established. This new situation made it possible to improve the political climate and renewed hope to see stability and economic recovery return to the country. However, the security situation suddenly deteriorated in early June 2005, just before the swearing in of General Bozize on 11 June 2005. The volatile security situation then compelled many people, in the North, estimated between 12 000 and 15 000, to leave their villages to seek refuge in Southern Chad in addition to the 30,000 who fled to Chad to escape atrocities following the 2003 rebellion.

III. SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSIONS

A. The security situation

9. It emerged from the various discussions the delegation had in the CAR, Chad and Cameroon, that the Prefectures of the CAR most affected by the instability are those closest to the country's borders with Cameroon and Chad. This instability is described generally as the work of unidentified armed groups, poachers and highway bandits. Some of the bandits took farmers' children hostage for huge ransoms. The various interlocutors seem to make a distinction between highway bandits driven by easy gain who attack and loot travelers, herdsmen and villages, and heavily armed groups, often in military uniforms who, in addition to committing atrocities and robbery, supposedly have political demands and enlist people by force.

10. At the border with Cameroon, the main targets of the attacks are the Bororo herdsmen who are traditionally found on both sides of the border of the two countries. These Bororo herdsmen from Central African Republic left their traditional rearing areas with their herds and crossed into Cameroon, without however constituting refugee camps.

11. The most serious problems arise along the CAR border with Chad, where five armed attacks against communities have been reported since June 2005. Weapons of war were used to carry out these attacks by groups bent on terrorizing the civilians who regard them as supporters of former President Ange-Felix Patassé.

12. While the authorities of the CAR claim that the attacks are mainly the work of highway robbers, other persons interviewed by the Mission blamed them emphatically on armed groups made up of former members of the security unit of former President Ange-Felix Patassé and the demobilized soldiers of General Bozizé, called ex-liberators, who are disgruntled about the meager gratuity they were paid after General Bozizé came to power.

13. According to the UNHCR Representative in Bangui, the insecurity is also caused by the trespassing and destructive migratory movement across farmlands by the Chadian herdsmen, who do not keep to the traditional routes reserved for cattle crossing. Unable to control these armed herdsmen, the CAR farmers witness the destruction of their farms and agricultural production, a situation which impoverishes them and forces them to migrate.

14. By way of resolving the increasing security problem, the Government of the CAR deployed units of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) to the affected areas. However, an assessment of the situation revealed that the number of the troops deployed is insufficient to cope with the magnitude of the problem. The soldiers sent are also ill equipped and unmotivated. These inadequacies are occasionally made up for by the limited support of soldiers from the Chadian army. France has also promised to provide the Government with air facilities to cope with the problem of insecurity.

15. Cameroon has also deployed troops along its border with the CAR to prevent incursions into its territory, and FOMUC has deployed units to Bozoum and Bria, in addition to its security outfit in Bangui.

16. At regional level, Chad, Cameroon and the CAR held a meeting from 25 to 26 August 2005, in Yaoundé, on cross-border security under the auspices of the United Nations Office in the CAR (BONUCA). The meeting examined the causes of the cross-border insecurity, its forms and the impact on the people of the three countries.

17. The meeting proposed the following measures to address the situation: careful deployment of units along high-risk highways and areas; strengthening the capacity of the defence and security forces on the ground (number of men, transport facilities, signals and information), involving the local administrative and traditional authorities in informing and creating awareness among the people, intensifying information exchange on security, notifying one another before carrying out planned operations in the border areas, with the possibility of

exchanging liaison officers, using air facilities for observation, and reviving the Joint Commissions. The meeting also recommended that contact between such border authorities as the administrative staff, the defence forces and security officials should be enhanced, that the exchange of signals and information should be intensified, and that joint patrols and operations should be mounted to regularly assess the security situation at the borders.

18. Medium and long term measures envisaged include obtaining assistance from international and regional organizations such as the UN, the AU, the EU, ECCAS, CEMAC and CEN-SAD, in the form of financial, logistical and operations (signals and air reconnaissance facilities) assistance, and providing military or civilian expertise in specific areas to be identified.

19. The meeting recommended that a Tripartite Commission should be set up for the implementation of and follow-up on the planned measures. The Commission should be made up of defence and security officials, as well as the local administrative authorities. Its mission should be to consider the security situation and identify financial, human and material resources to be mobilized.

20. Following the Tripartite Meeting, Chad and Cameroon held a bilateral meeting in Bertoua from 17 to 20 October 2005. Another such bilateral meeting is schedule to be held between Cameroon and the CAR.

B. The Humanitarian Situation

21. With logistical support from the UNHCR Office in Chad, the AU Mission was able to visit two refugee camps.

22. The Yaroungou Camp (Maro Sub-Prefecture, Department of Grand Sido): This camp, which is located near the border with the CAR, is host to about 15, 000 refugees from the CAR who arrive in 2003. The tarpaulin shelters provided by UNHCR in this camp are gradually being replaced with non-stabilized earth bricks, which give the camp the appearance of an ordinary Chadian village. As 90 percent of the refugees in this camp are farmers, they practice subsistence farming to supplement the food supplies provided by the World Food Programme (WFP). Furthermore, the camp has a health centre, a school, several boreholes and wells and a market. The refugees live in a stable environment, but are concerned about the irregular distribution of food by WFP and the prospect of that support coming to an end.

23. The Amboko Camp (Goré Prefecture): This camp plays host to refugees who arrived since 2003 (about 16, 000) and those who joined them as from June 2005. They are estimated to be between 12, 000 and 15,000. It is located near the CAR town of Markounda, which came under armed attacks on 27 September 2005. The camp has almost reached saturation point, and therefore, UNHCR,

with the consent of the Chadian authorities, plans to set up a new camp in Gonjé, which should be able to host about 15 000 persons.

24. The UNHCR manages the two camps and protects the refugees in collaboration with the Chadian authorities and NGOs. In both camps operate NGOs such as African Concern, Africare, Coopi, the Doctors Without Borders (Netherlands), GTZ, and the Red Cross of Chad. WFP provides food supplies, while the NGOs deal with issues related to environment, education, health, water supply, food distribution, household goods, etc. The requirements in terms of food, shelter and household goods have increased far beyond the UNHCR reserves as a result of the new influx of refugees. Apart from taking care of the newly arrived, the refugees of Amboko said they needed agricultural implements, seeds and inputs.

25. However, UNHCR is finding it difficult to obtain all the necessary resources to fully meet the needs of the refugees whose number is constantly increasing. Appeals to the international community have not received the necessary response. Under the circumstances, the visit of the AU Mission raised some hope.

C. Economic and social situation

26. The resolution of the security, humanitarian and social problems referred to earlier should be viewed within the context of the serious economic and financial crisis facing the CAR for more than a decade now. This crisis has affected the foundations of the economy, led to the dilapidation of the country's infrastructure, reduced the Government's ability to fully carry out its functions and weakened the entire institutions of State. As a result, the new authorities that emerged from the elections only had a short period of respite.

27. The negotiations initiated with the international financial institutions in January 2004 have made it possible to conclude agreements and achieve the expected results. However, the IMF approved a loan of $US 8.2 million for the country in June 2004 under its post-conflict emergency assistance programme. This loan is subject to terms and conditions such as reduction of the wage bill, combating corruption and adequate mobilization of local resources.

28. At the end of a joint evaluation mission in July 2005, the IMF and the World Bank noted an increase in the wage bill and a decrease in revenues. Another mission by the two institutions, in September 2005, made it possible for the Government of the Central African Republic and the IMF to agree on a programme that could qualify for post-conflict emergency assistance. The joint World Bank/IMF mission also noted a slight recovery of economic activity and welcomed the measures taken to manage public finances and the wage bill.

29. CEMAC, China, the EU and France have also provided financial aid to the CAR, but this ad hoc assistance did not enable the Government to solve the cash-flow problems on a long term basis. This situation led to accumulation of the salaries of civil servants, with attendant social and economic problems. Furthermore, the state of the economy did not make it possible for the Government to deploy sufficient troops in the North to deal with the insecurity The Government of the Central African Republic has high hopes in the assistance from the international community. In this connection, it would like the AU to intercede on its behalf with the donors, so that the country's case can be examined with greater attention and flexibility.

IV. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

30. The Mission was unable to clearly establish that the insecurity which persists in the north of the CAR is the result of a budding rebellion. At the same time, it should be noted that many soldiers faithful to former President Ange-Félix Patassé might be among the perpetrators of the armed activities carried out it in the affected areas. Moreover, the "ex-liberators" who felt let down by President Bozizé could also be part of any operation aimed at destabilizing his Government.

31. Be that as it may, the professional nature of the operations in the ground carried out using sentries and routes for retreat and evacuation of the wounded, indicates that the perpetrators could be more than just bandits and highway robbers. Deserters from the Chadian army could also be found in the areas affected by the insecurity. The current modus operandi of the armed groups who are on foot gives the impression that they might be recruiting people to launch future major operations. Faced with such a situation, the 380 men making up FOMUC would be an insignificant force.

32. In view of the foregoing, greater efforts are needed to restore security, including strengthening FOMUC. Any initiative to be taken in this regard should be within the regional context. For its part, the Commission intends to intensify its consultations with the countries of the region with a view to exploring possible ways and means of helping the CAR to overcome its current difficulties. This help could take the form of expertise to be sought from Member States.

33. The present situation of the 40 000 refugees from the Central African Republic living in Southern Chad calls for urgent action on the part of the International community. I make an urge to Member States and the International Community to provide the necessary assistance to the populations concerned and to Chad. In this regard, the AU Commission for Refugees should mount a vigorous sensitization campaign.

34. Beyond these short-term actions, the challenges to the addressed in the CAR are economic and financial. The success of security and political measures put in place to permanently remove insecurity will depend on the resolution of financial and economic issues. Indeed, effective economic and financial assistance should make it possible to reduce social tension, motivate the defense and security forces, resume various development projects, revive economic activities and restore hope to the entire population. Within this context, and pursuant to the provisions of the PSC Protocol on post-conflict reconstruction, I intend to dispatch a team of experts to the CAR to assess the socio-economic situation and recommend concrete actions that the AU and its Member States could take to help consolidate the significant inroads made to restore peace and stability.